

7-2010

Archaeology on the Road: July 24–31, 2010

Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/osa_pubs

Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa, "Archaeology on the Road: July 24–31, 2010" (2010). *Publications from The Office of the State Archaeologist*. 1.
https://ir.uiowa.edu/osa_pubs/1

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the Vice President for Research at Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications from The Office of the State Archaeologist by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE ROAD



JULY 24-31, 2010

www.iowaArchaeology.org

GREETINGS

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Not only are we excited that Team Archaeology is back for our third ride, we are energized to be part of a "Human and Natural History" partnership that allows us expanded opportunities to share the story of Iowa's amazing past. Once again there will be archaeologists along for the ride, as well as at Expo and this year at roadside locations Day One, Five and Six. Don't hesitate to ask about the history of the first people to travel this landscape as well as the stories of each generation that has contributed to what we know of ourselves today. We will also feature information about the landscape and natural resources of Iowa you will encounter along the route through our partnering colleagues specializing in geology, hydrology, and other earth sciences. Enjoy using this booklet as your guide to the week's activities and please help yourself to free materials from our outreach booth about our shared past and the natural world we depend on. Ride smart, be safe, and when you get home, be sure to tell your friends and neighbors about Iowa archaeology!

- John F. Doershuk, State Archaeologist

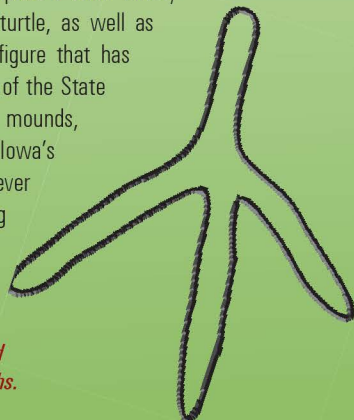
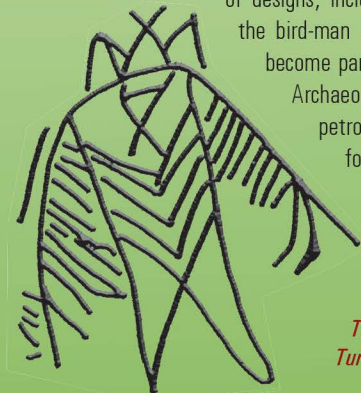


State Archaeologist, John Doershuk, sporting the Team Archaeology cycling jersey.

PETROGLYPHS IN IOWA

Petroglyphs, or stone engraved images, appear in a number of places across Iowa, and the last part of our ride on Day 1 brings us very near a prominent example. Pilot Rock, a massive boulder transported and deposited by the last glacier, is located just north of the route, along Highway 59 (which intersects with the route after Quimby) and contains several incised images.

The largest petroglyph on the boulder is a "turkey track," and measures 34 cm (13.4 inches). Similar "turkey track" motifs have been found throughout the Midwest. Other Iowa petroglyph sites comprise a wide variety of designs, including: bear, buffalo, and turtle, as well as the bird-man (anthropomorphized bird) figure that has become part of the seal of the Office of the State Archaeologist. Much like burial mounds, petroglyphs are a visible sign of Iowa's former inhabitants, and are ever in danger of disappearing do to vandalism and weathering.



Tracings of Birdman (left) and Turkey Track (right) petroglyphs.

DAY 1

SIoux CITY TO STORM LAKE



COWAN SITE

*Great Oasis
ceramic pot*

Archaeological work along an Iowa Department of Transportation bypass project for U.S. 75 around Sioux City resulted in an important discovery. Named after the landowner at the time, the "Cowan Site" has revealed significant information about early farming villages in northwestern Iowa.

In 1998, a crew of 24 archaeologists, led by Toby Morrow of the OSA, undertook a 12-week excavation to mitigate the highway's impact to the site. Over 122,000 items were recovered, some buried as deeply as 120 cm (4 ft) below the surface of the modern Floyd River flood plain. Burned earth, daub, and post molds confirmed the presence of houses, and animal bones and carbonized seeds from storage pits yielded detailed information about the inhabitants' subsistence activities.

Cowan has been interpreted as a small farming hamlet, possibly consisting of up to five houses occupied concurrently approximately 1000 years ago. Residents raised corn and other domesticates, made decorated pottery, manufactured stone tools, and processed various plant and animal resources for clothing, shelter, and food.

Archaeologists define the Cowan Site to be part

of the Great Oasis prehistoric culture first identified 50 years ago and initially believed to be confined to a limited area of southwestern Minnesota. Recent research, however, has expanded Great Oasis occupation to a four-state area, including parts of Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa. One of the important research questions about Great Oasis focuses on the amount of contact with Mississippian peoples who also frequented the same

area. The Cowan Site, despite the presence of non-local cherts, has yielded no evidence of trade with Mississippian groups. One explanation is that Great Oasis is chronologically earlier than Mississippian occupation of northwest Iowa.



*Above:
excavation
photograph*

*Right:
excavation
in progress*



DAY 2

STORM LAKE TO ALGONA

HOAXES IN IOWA ARCHAEOLOGY

Hoaxes have had a long history in archaeology, from Piltdown Man in England, to the Kensington Runestone in Minnesota. Iowa, unfortunately, has not been immune to this phenomenon either, and we are reminded of this as we pedal our way to Algona in Kossuth County, home to the “Kossuth Giants”.

In what was clearly posted as a parody on yawp.com, the story of the unearthing of mummified giant remains on a Kossuth County farm quickly took on a life of its own, when it was picked up by any number of other paranormal websites. It went so far, in fact, that our own Team Archaeology rider, Dan Higginbottom, archaeologist for the State Historical Society, took emails and calls asking for more information on this unique discovery!

Another Iowa hoax, known as the Davenport Conspiracy, began in 1877 when 2 incised slate tablets (a third was found a year later) were found in a burial mound outside



of Davenport. These tablets incited years of controversy, cover-up and accusation, only to be fully discredited as forgeries later.

Perhaps the most famous hoax is that of the Cardiff Giant. The “giant” was uncovered in 1869 on a farm near Cardiff, New York, and was purportedly the remains of a 10-ft tall, petrified man. Eventually it was found that the giant started out as a slab of gypsum quarried near Ft. Dodge, taken to Chicago for sculpting, and then shipped to New York, where it was buried and subsequently unearthed. People from all around paid to see the giant on exhibition, and it drew such crowds, that P.T. Barnum had a second “Cardiff Giant” fashioned for his own display.

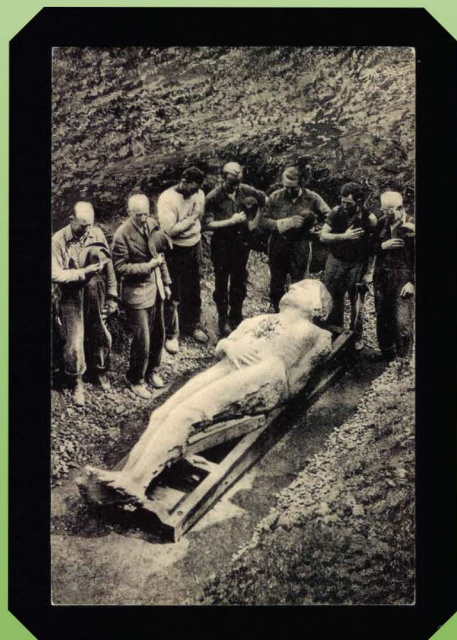
A modern replica of the giant resides at Fort Dodge’s Fort Museum.

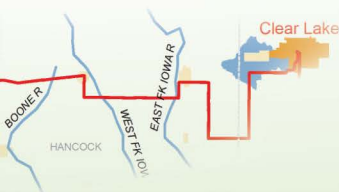


Two incised tablets from the Davenport Conspiracy. Photographs courtesy of Putnam Museum.



Photograph of Cardiff Giant.





DAY 3

ALGONA TO CLEAR LAKE

WWII PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS



Camp Algona was the home to over 10,000 German soldiers between 1944 and 1946. Located just a few miles west of Algona, the camp spanned 287 acres and had a total of 178 buildings in all. The Algona camp was the home base of an extensive P.O.W. camp system, with 34 branch camps spread throughout Iowa, Minnesota, and North and South Dakota under

its supervision; two of which, Storm Lake and Charles City, coincidentally, are also overnight towns on this year's route. Prisoners of these camps spent most of their time as day laborers in nearby canneries or on farms, but in their free time engaged in music, sports, arts and even generated and circulated a camp newspaper. For more information check out <http://www.pwcamp.algona.org/>, or visit the museum while in town.



*Upper: Camp Algona
Center Right: cannery workers
Center Left: camp entrance
Lower: POW workers*



Photographs courtesy of Camp Algona POW Museum.

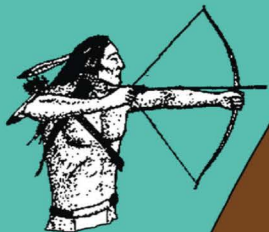


Iowa Projectile Points

www.uiowa.edu/~osa

700 South Clinton Street
Iowa City, IA 52242

Stone projectile points, including tools which functioned as spear heads, dart tips, knives, and arrow heads, are the most identifiable artifacts left by prehistoric Native Americans. Archaeologists have long understood that this artifact class varies both spatially and temporally. Projectile point typologies are a common descriptive tool of archaeological analysis as a preliminary stage in the assessment of any artifact assemblage. Through excavation of archaeological sites, recovered projectile points can be associated with specific time and culture periods. These well-placed point types are coupled with associated finds and surface finds to create a relative chronology for projectile points. This projectile point display represents the typological and chronological variability of Iowa points for the past 13,000 years with 53 different point types included.



1000 BP

2000 BP

4000 BP

8000 BP

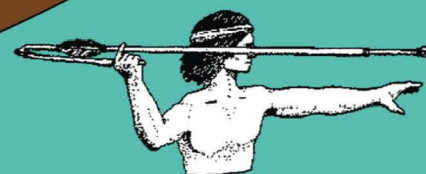
12,000 BP

PaleoIndian Period

Archaic Period

Woodland Period

Late Prehistoric Period



**Keep an eye out
for the full-sized
poster at up
coming events**

A PDF version is available
for download on our
website:
www.iowaarchaeology.org

*Poster created by Mark Anderson of the
OSA and Sarah Horgen of the UI Museum
of Natural History.*

DAY 4

CLEAR LAKE TO CHARLES CITY

PRAIRIE MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Prairie Modern or Prairie School Architecture is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the prairie and was founded very directly on the climate, landforms, and lifestyle of the region. The buildings are abstractions of Midwestern landforms and nature. They are part of the landscape but still apart.

Sullivan, Wright, Griffin, and Drummond were internationally famous architects who worked in Iowa and advanced the Prairie School form. There were two phases of Prairie School in Iowa. The first was Chicago-oriented and ran from 1900 to 1930. The second lasted from 1930 to the present and incorporated more modernist ideas, with Wright's Usonian houses setting the tenor through the 1970s. Aspects of the

Just off the route is Mason City, which is unique for its high quality Prairie Modern architecture and extensive Prairie Modern planning. It has the highest concentration of great Prairie School architecture in Iowa and is definitely worth a visit. Down the road, Charles City has the Blake, Dodd, and Lindman houses, and along the Cedar River is the Usonian style Miller house by Frank Lloyd Wright, made of stone, plaster, and cypress. In Quasqueton, on the Wapsipinicon River, is another notable Wright-designed county home, the Walter

House and river pavilion, which can be toured. In Dubuque, on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, are the significant CCC-built Eagle Point Park Shelters both expressing the Prairie Modern idiom at its finest and providing a spectacular view.

- Marlin Ingalls, Architectural Historian for the OSA



The Adams building, Algona

style include local stonework and stucco, overhanging eaves, piers and supports, and a rectilinear treatment of the mass and details.

Starting with Sioux City there are classic examples of the Prairie School in every overnight town and several pass-through towns along the route. Sioux City has a large concentration of Prairie Modern houses as well as commercial and public buildings, including the Woodbury County courthouse, a must-see. The Adams building in downtown Algona is a small, understated jewel. In Clear Lake, the Stillman house and others stand out in the tree-lined streets.



DAY 5

CHARLES CITY TO WATERLOO

ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE ROUTE

As you leave Clarks-ville today and travel south across the bridge over the Shell Rock River, you will be passing over an archaeological site that has experienced at least 5000 years worth of occupation. The site (13BT13) was located in 1991 during archaeological investigations related to a bridge replacement and gravel road relocation. The historic aspect of the site dates



Two projectile points recovered from the site.

from the middle of the nineteenth century into the 1940s and included an entire domesticated horse burial. The prehistoric component of the site consisted of stone tools, pottery, and cultural features such as cooking pits. Examination of the thousands of artifacts recovered indicated that prehistoric occupation the site began in the Late Archaic period (3,000–800 B.C.) and continued through to the Late Woodland period (500–1,600 A.D.). Multicomponent sites like this one, where both historic and prehistoric artifacts are present, can be common throughout Iowa.

Did you know... the first major cement highway in Iowa was poured between Clear Lake and Mason City in 1917?



*Lower Left: Woodbury County court house, Sioux City
Upper Left: Eagle Point Park shelter, Dubuque
Upper Right: Mason City postcard
Lower Right: Romey House, Mason City*



Excavation of horse burial at Site 13BT13.

DAY 6

WATERLOO TO MANCHESTER

TECHNOLOGY IN ARCHAEOLOGY

While the primary tools in archaeology will always be the old fashioned trowel, shaker screen and shovel, new technology allows archaeologists to be more accurate when locating and recording possible sites, and less invasive when working on them. Here are just a few tools that help us accomplish this:

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) uses radar pulses to image and study the sub-surface. Under the right conditions GPR is able to detect objects, and changes in material at various depths below ground.

Global Positioning System (GPS) uses space based satellites to give very accurate locational data for recording a site.

Total Station is an electronic optical instrument used for surveying. Archaeologists use a Total Station to create an accurate topographical map of a site and for placing excavation units.

LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) is a remote sensing technology used to collect topographic data over a large area. Collected with aircraft mounted lasers, it enables archaeologists to locate earthworks such as mounds, fortifications, and earthlodge depressions in remote areas and beneath tree canopies, where they might have otherwise gone undetected.

Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computer program used to capture and display geographic data. Once in a GIS, archaeologists are able use data to identify and analyze spatial patterns.



Total Station



Handheld GPS



BLANDING CHERT

Between the overnight towns of Waterloo and Manchester, be on the lookout for outcrops of Blanding chert, a local chert that has been utilized by Native Americans for thousands of years. Matching the type of stone an artifact is made from to naturally occurring outcrops of that stone, is a process called "geologic sourcing." This practice provides archaeologists with information on trade relations and social interactions. The OSA is home to an extensive chert comparative



collection of over 500 samples, with many types available for viewing online. On our website curious users can find: maps highlighting the locations of chert outcrops across the state, a program to aid in the identification of chert types, and interactive graphics depicting the in-house samples. Log on and check it out at www.uiowa.edu/~osa/lithics/.

Point from blanding chert

DAY 7

MANCHESTER TO DUBUQUE



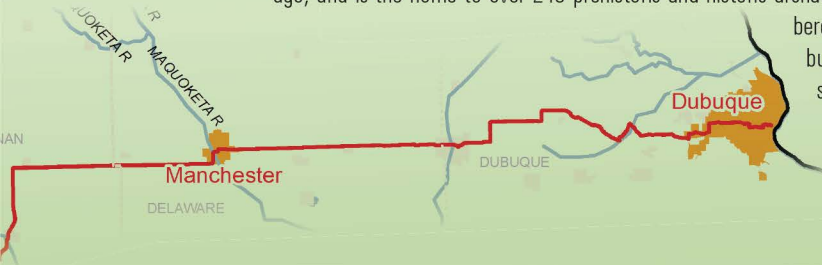
*Julien Dubuque
Monument*

MINES OF SPAIN

Just south of our final destination town of Dubuque is the Mines of Spain Recreation Area, a National Historic Landmark that encompasses 1380 acres along the Mississippi River. "Mines of Spain" was the name specified for the area in the land grant received in 1796 by Julien Dubuque from the Governor of New Spain. Prior to that, Dubuque had obtained permission to mine lead from the Meskwaki Indians, who inhabited in the area at the time. Julien Dubuque is credited as the first European to have settled on what is now Iowa soil. He died in 1810 and a monument to him stands in the park, high on a bluff overlooking the river.

The Mines of Spain has a rich cultural history that dates back at least 8,000 years ago, and is the home to over 240 prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Num-

bered among them are burial mounds, rock shelters, and habitation sites, as well as early historic mine pits and archaeological evidence for logging.



NATIVE AMERICAN TOYS AND GAMES

The majority of the artifacts recovered in archaeological excavations, arrowheads, spear points, grinding stones, bone hoes, bones and seeds, tell us about what people ate and how they obtained it. Some less common artifacts, however, are clues to the other dimensions of these people's lives. Round stone disks, called "Chunkee Stones", pottery and shell disks used as gaming pieces, and perforated deer foot bones found in archaeological sites all match items used for games by historic Native Americans. These artifacts have been found in sites that are up to 1,000 years old. Even in the prehistoric past we know that men, women, and children enjoyed the challenge and fun of playing games.



THANK YOU

to all our sponsors!



Humanities Iowa

www.humanitiesiowa.org



**THE UNIVERSITY
OF IOWA**

www.uiowa.edu

**Association of
Iowa Archaeologists**

www.uiowa.edu/~osa/aia



www.uiowa.edu/~osa/IAS



www.earthviewenvironmental.com

**STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY of
IOWA**

www.iowahistory.org

Human and Natural History Partners

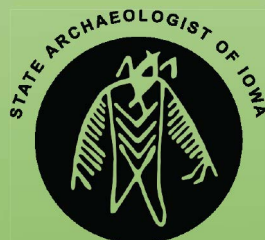
The Office of the State Archaeologist is pleased to partner on this year's outreach with the IDNR-Geological and Water Survey and the U.S. Geological Survey, creating the "Human and Natural History Partners". This partnership begins at Expo and continues throughout the week's ride, with information tables set up every day along the route. Our groups have been doing similar educational outreaches along the route for the past several years, and because we share this common venue and common goals for bringing information to the public, we decided to join forces. So keep a lookout for us at Expo, on the ride, in the campgrounds, and along the route!



www.igsb.uiowa.edu



ia.water.usgs.gov



www.uiowa.edu/~osa

Booklet designed and edited by Angela R. Collins and John Hall of the OSA.